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WORLD-POLITICS.

PARIS: WASHINGTON.

PARIS, *June, 1907.*

It is always idle and often dangerous to say before the event that a nation is coming to a turning-point in its fortunes, that a new departure in politics is imminent or to commit oneself generally to any similar sweeping assertion. So, whatever may be the consequences in the near or remote future, I will merely say that I have to note in the present communication a not unexpected, but, nevertheless, somewhat sudden, check to the Socialist movement, which means a great deal more than even a change of Government. It is now eight years since the Socialists, numbering at the time little more than fifty, took the lead in the French Chamber. M. Waldeck-Rousseau had just come into office and cast about for the means of parrying the silly practical joke—consisting in a collusion of the Monarchists with the Extreme Left—by which half a dozen Premiers before him had been victimized. He thought that the only way open to him was to annex bodily the whole Socialist group, by adopting such parts of their programme as appeared realizable and securing the concurrence of one of their strongest men. So it was that social reforms like the suppression of the courts-martial, liberty of association, an old-age pension fund, etc., took the place of purely political measures, and the Socialist Millerand became Minister of Commerce.

This combination worked tolerably well throughout the three years of the Waldeck-Rousseau and the two years of the Combes Governments. The Socialists checked their natural violence and consented to be disciplined into supporters of the Cabinet. On the other hand, the old Radical group tinged their professions of faith with as much Socialism as they could absorb and gradually

called themselves Radical-Socialists. The immediate result was that Governments appeared more stable and became of unwonted duration.

Nevertheless, it was evident to the clear-sighted that the alliance between such opposite elements as the Socialists and their *bourgeois* neighbors could only be kept up artificially, and by a tacit agreement between them to steer clear of inevitable crucial questions. Some very useful measures were passed by M. Millebrand: for instance, the creation of Councils of Labor and the law on the liability of employers, whilst legislation upon strikes was considerably improved. But these reforms had been for twenty years on M. de Mun's programme as well as on that of M. Jaurès. Of distinctly Socialist transformations there was no mention, or they were introduced in a manner so unmistakably academical that the blunt Socialists outside Parliament never refrained from calling them humbug. Practically, the only common platform on which the Socialists combined with the Radicals without any danger was anti-clericalism, and the positive work achieved until the general election of 1906 was little more than the expulsion of the religious orders, the break with Rome and, finally, the separation of Church and State.

The election returned to the Chamber an overwhelming majority of anti-clericals, demonstrating that the power of the Church and the danger accruing from it were mere bugbears. In spite of the tremendous effort made by M. Piou (*vide* the Montagnini papers), the "*Action Libérale*" or Catholic party and the Monarchists did not make up a sixth part of the Chamber.

The situation henceforward was clear. The Socialists had gained a score of seats; the Radical-Socialists had adhered to several of their claims (*viz.*, the nationalization of railways and mines, the income tax and old-age pensions); there was a most able Socialist in the Cabinet, M. Briand; and the real Premier, M. Clémenceau, was a Radical-Socialist. In consequence, the policy to be followed during the four years of the new Parliament ought to be the Radical-Socialist policy. The first week of the session was entirely filled by the memorable conversation between Jaurès and Clémenceau, the upshot of which was that anti-clericalism, being purely negative, had become as indifferent to the country as clericalism; that Socialism in its radical form, *i. e.*, Collectivism, was impossible; but that the Socialism of re-

formers was in keeping with the wishes of the country appeared on the programme of the greater part of the majority, and therefore indicated the work which the Chamber ought to take up at once. In fact, the nationalization of railways—beginning with the Western Railway—the income tax and old-age pension were the chief topics of the Ministerial address read by M. Clémenceau.

The Socialists regarded them as the minimum which they ought to expect from a Radical-Socialist Ministry. As to the Radical-Socialists, there is every reason to believe that they looked upon these measures as mere electoral professions, political castles in the air, which are always talked about and never seen. No less than seven income-tax bills have been framed by successive Ministers, and discussed by as many Committees, without anything ever coming of them. Why, they probably asked themselves, should this comfortable state of affairs be changed under Clémenceau, rather than under Combes? Our Radical-Socialists, therefore, saw with perfect equanimity M. Caillaux tackle the eighth income-tax bill, and M. Clémenceau entrust to the Senate the nationalization of the Western Railway.

However, this tranquillity was soon to be disturbed. After a long and scandalous opposition from all the Conservative parties, Radicals as well as Monarchists, a law enforcing weekly rest was passed by the Chamber and put on its trial. The result might have been prophesied. The employed naturally welcomed their weekly holiday, but insisted that no reduction in their salary ought to follow, while employers resented the idea of more men being employed and smaller profits cleared. The opinions of both parties were soon echoed in Parliament, thanks to several strikes of exceptional duration; the *bourgeois* Radicals spoke of serious changes to be made in the law, and the Socialists assumed a threatening tone which had not been heard for many years on their benches. The "class contest" was beginning to be more than a scarecrow. After a few months, the law was so altered as to be virtually nullified; but the Socialists started an agitation unparalleled in the history of the Third Republic, which soon brought the conflict between them and the Radicals to the verge of exasperation.

There is no unanimity among the French Socialists, and even in the Chamber their union is often little better than a necessity;

but their practical organization has reached a perfection to which only religious associations have heretofore attained. The strength of this organization lies in the fact that it rests on definite and undoubted interests, being not exclusively political, but rather economic. The whole country is covered with a powerful network of trade-unions, in close connection with one another, and bound together by a General Labor Confederation, the seat of which is at the Labor Exchange of Paris. The existence of the trade-unions was made legal as early as 1884, and the federation of kindred unions was natural and spontaneous. But the General Confederation of unions of all kinds only took place three or four years ago, not without secret jealousy and disquietude on the part of the Government, which could not but feel that a central organization with a legal seat in Paris—the Labor Exchange was built by the State—large financial possibilities, and unquestioned authority constituted another government, set up against it.

It is with this tremendous power that the Radicals are now quarrelling.

The reader may wonder that they should have waited so long to enter upon open warfare with such dangerous enemies. But the enmity was not absolutely clear from the first. Some "companions" made no secret of the hopes they entertained of being able gradually to organize the Fourth Estate so strongly that the *bourgeois* would one day find themselves face to face with the whole proletariat; and the yearly threat of a universal strike on May 1st ought to have admonished the Radicals of the real intentions of the Confederation. But, as I have said, the Radicals still lived under the delusion that their political union with M. Jaurès in Parliament meant security everywhere.

They were suddenly aroused by a few rather startling moves of the Confederation.

At the same time that vast protest against the remodelling of the law on weekly rest was the order of the day, a Socialist movement was initiated in quarters where only a few years back it would have been supposed impossible. There have been, of late years, constant strikes of the workmen employed at Cherbourg, Brest, Lorient and Toulon in the naval arsenals, and there may be some connection between the spirit of lawlessness prevalent in those ports and the terrible series of disasters in the French Navy during the past two years. These mechanics do not

strike merely to have their wages raised or their hours shortened,—the fact is they are pretty well paid for little work,—but they insist that they have a right to form themselves into a trade-union in connection with the General Confederation, even though their employer be the State and their occupation that of national defence. This theory all successive Governments have naturally rejected. But their resistance never was sufficiently decided to preclude fresh attempts at securing corporate immunity. The consequence was that the tide rose instead of subsiding. In October last the Paris postmen struck in their turn, formed into syndicates and succeeded in having themselves entered at the Labor Exchange. Several of them were dismissed, but the General Confederation still keeps up an agitation to have them taken back. Finally, the elementary teachers, whose Socialist tendencies are every day growing stronger, transformed their friendly societies into trade-unions and would have affiliated them with the General Confederation if they had not met with an indignant interdict from M. Clémenceau. However, whether affiliated or not, the Confederation can boast, and does boast on every occasion, that, whenever the general strike is possible, the national defence in the ports, the postal services in Paris and education in most places shall be stopped, as well as railway traffic and the making of bread.

This prospect is dark, indeed, and its possibility might have been doubted had it not been for two manifestations of the violence latent in the Socialist circles. On March 9th, the electricians employed in the Paris works, dissatisfied with the trend of negotiations entered into by the Municipal Council with two rival companies, suddenly stopped work, and for two nights Paris was given up to the picturesqueness and dangers of torch-light. On the third night, M. Clémenceau sent in military electricians who worked as best they could, but this interference was violently denounced by M. Jaurès, who insisted that it amounted to setting the right of striking at naught, and a fresh agitation ensued. A few days later, a placard bearing the signatures of the members of the "Central Committee" and addressed to M. Clémenceau was posted up everywhere. This mysterious "Central Committee"—unheard of since the dark days of the Commune—simply told the Premier that, only a short time ago, he championed the syndicates of State Servants,

and reminded the Minister of Education of a certain untoward speech delivered by him—in the not very remote period when he was a Socialistic journalist—to the effect that the general strike ought to be the great object of the Socialists, and if the soldiers were sent by the Government against their suffering brethren, their rifles might not be discharged in the expected direction.

This bold interference of the Central Committee caused a commotion in Paris and roused the Government. M. Briand dismissed—against the decision of the special jury—a schoolmaster who had signed the placard, and M. Clémenceau found a pretext for imprisoning two other members of the Committee.

Even the grim appearance of the Central Committee, however, would have left the Parisians indifferent but for the object-lesson they had previously received from the electricians. This had much more than a transient effect. For the first time a tremendous power had been injured—the press, which nowadays depends almost entirely on electricity—and the outcry for two days' annoyance was much louder than it had been for many a dire injustice. For the first time, the Socialist papers found themselves alone, against all the rest of the press, in trying to explain and defend the strikers' action. For the first time, many an amateur in semi-Socialist literature felt that the game was serious and that he might be making a fool of himself. I have never seen the press so unanimous as it has been during the past three months in denouncing, as a "public danger," the work of the General Confederation, and calling upon the Government to be firm in the defence of Society. There has been a marked dearth of exciting political events, and yet the tone of the papers never was more excited.

Unfortunately for M. Clémenceau and his Cabinet, this unanimity has gone farther against Socialistic ideas than he would have liked, and the consequence is a highly paradoxical situation. The Chamber, like the press, has followed the Premier in his resistance to the General Confederation; so much so that M. Clémenceau would have run no risk in limiting the Syndicates to their natural business and introducing a bill against any political action on their part. The Socialists are now completely isolated, and M. Pelletan, one of the few Radical-Socialists who adhere to them, is deeply disgusted with his own group, whom he calls liars and renegades. But neither the press nor the Parlia-

ment will be content with a shabby policy of resistance to outrages which the courts ought to be competent to repress. What they want is nothing short of a reversal of the programme adopted by both the Socialists and the Radical-Socialists. But, as I have said above, the outstanding points of this programme are the nationalization of the Western Railway and the income tax, and these two bills were the centrepiece of M. Clémenceau's Ministerial address. The Western Railway bill is opposed by the senatorial committee appointed for its examination, by all the great companies whose future it implicitly threatens, and by the seventy-seven French Chambers of Commerce without a single exception. The income-tax bill fares even worse. At a recent election of senatorial delegates, two ex-Ministers were left out on their stating that they were favorable to the bill.

M. Jaurès has already begun a campaign of intimidation which might force the Senate into obedience; but the Senate counts for little as compared with the press, and the average income—distinctly that of the journalist—is confessedly that which will most suffer. The unscrupulous but powerful and popular newspaper, "*Le Matin*," wages daily war against the bill, which at present has not the ghost of a chance.

Now the question is, first of all, What is to become of a Cabinet whose fortunes M. Clémenceau has solemnly bound up with those of the two bills? Clearly it must go to pieces the moment it is thrown against such an obstacle. M. Clémenceau is not likely to give up his own programme, and if he did, he would, in M. Ribot's words, rob the Moderates of their own policy, which would only be another manner of reinstating them in power, and of placing himself in an impossible position. Go, then, he must, and possibly will of his own accord, instead of stultifying himself.

Another question is, How is a majority to be found exclusive of the Radical-Socialist programme and the Radical-Socialist vote? Will it be strong enough to encounter the immense power organized by the Socialists and impersonated by the General Confederation of Labor, which is tainted with anti-religious and anti-patriotic fallacies, and is lawless and reckless?

This the future will answer, but the *bourgeois* unanimity in the press, compared with such a movement as that of the wine-growers refusing in seven departments to pay a farthing of their taxes, shows that the crisis may be very near.

WASHINGTON, *June, 1907.*

THERE is no doubt that the delegates of the United States to the second Hague Conference have been exceedingly well treated as regards assignments to the three important committees which are to deal respectively with the questions of arbitration, land warfare and maritime warfare. There still seems to be, however, some uncertainty concerning the position which the representatives of our Government will take concerning one interesting matter. When, on June 19th, General Horace Porter, one of our delegates, announced that the United States would reserve the right to present the question of a reduction of armaments, it was too hastily assumed that our State Department means to exercise the right. It may be averred upon the highest authority that, in the opinion of Mr. Root, the mooted question properly belongs to some European Power, and that only at the last moment, if at all, will the United States start a discussion of a proposal in which other countries are more deeply concerned. There are two reforms of moment, however, with regard to which it is settled that our delegates will stand forth as advocates of material changes in international law. For at least half a century we have been champions of the principle that the private property even of the subjects or citizens of a belligerent Power should be immune from capture at sea, unless it should be adjudged contraband of war. Our Government would have renounced privateering, and signed the Declaration of Paris, made in 1856, if the other signatories would have accepted that principle. It is expected that our delegates will now bring forward a similar proposal, but it remains to be seen whether Great Britain, which rejected the suggestion fifty-one years ago, is now inclined to take a different view of it. In 1856, she was far from being so dependent on the importation of breadstuffs from this side of the Atlantic as she is now. As regards the second object to which our efforts will be especially directed, Mr. Joseph H. Choate, the head of the American delegation, announced in a letter to M. Nelidoff, the President of the Conference, that, at the proper time, he should raise the question of prohibiting the collection by force of contract debts, a proceeding of which the latest example was the bombardment of Venezuelan seaports by the allied squadrons of Great Britain, Germany and Italy. Opinions differ as to the likelihood of an endorsement of the

proposal by the Conference. Great Britain (with Egypt in mind), and Germany and Italy, that by violence made themselves preferred creditors of Venezuela, and secured the application of a part of the debtor's customs revenue to the liquidation of their claims, can scarcely be expected to assent to the proposed change in the law of nations. It seems, moreover, to have been assumed too hastily that, in recommending the Drago Doctrine, our Government would have the support of all the Latin-American republics. Two of those commonwealths—Brazil and Mexico—do not regard the doctrine with favor, and the representatives of Chile are expected to take a similar attitude. On the whole, the prospect of seeing the Drago Doctrine embedded in international law is not good.

The apprehension which seems to have been felt in some quarters that the destruction of the property of certain Japanese residents by a mob in San Francisco might provoke a demand for an indemnity, and that this demand, if pressed without a preceding recourse to the Courts, might create on the part of our people a resentment that would lead to war, has died away. It is true that some well-informed and thoughtful citizens of California still take a very serious view of the situation. For example, Mr. Benjamin Ide Wheeler, President of the University of California, speaking at a dinner given in New York on June 20th, expressed the belief that the conditions on the Pacific Coast, so far as Oriental peoples are concerned, are still very grave, and present to American residents in that section a question that will not be solved easily. He pronounced it a mistake to suppose that all we have to consider is whether or no the Japanese and Chinese shall be permitted to attend the schools frequented by white children, or that we have only to inquire whether or no certain Japanese have been assaulted or despoiled. The question, he says, is of much broader scope. It is whether or no the people of that coast shall become inoculated with Oriental ideas and customs. In a word, shall or shall not the States of the Pacific Coast suffer the same fate that has overtaken Hawaii? That is one view of the matter. A very different opinion was expressed on the same day in Washington by Viscount Aoki, the Ambassador of Japan. He insisted that there is no "situation" and no "question" between Japan and the United States. He averred that, on the contrary, the best of relations exist, and that there is no dispute under

diplomatic consideration. He pronounced it distressing that there should be agitation over trifles which are of purely local import, if of import at all. To the inquiry whether the so-called Progressive party, of which Count Okuma used to be the head, is strong enough, or likely to be strong enough, to secure his recall, Viscount Aoki pointed out that the Progressives do not possess a majority in the popular branch of the Tokio Parliament, and have no present prospect of securing one. He might have added that the so-called "Constitutionalists" and "Unionists," between them, greatly preponderate in that body, and both of those parties have refused to cooperate with the Progressives in the stimulation of anti-American sentiment. Moreover, within the last few days, the Progressive party itself has split upon that point. Viscount Aoki directed attention also to the fact that, while Japan might have, at the utmost, including its newly acquired subjects, a population of about 50,000,000, the United States have not far from ninety millions, and are incomparably richer. He declared, in fine, that no country could dominate the Pacific, and that it was absurd to suppose that Japan could ever hope to control so vast a commerce as China and other Asiatic countries are capable of developing. It was true, he admitted, that labor is cheap in Japan; but he was confident, he said, that the United States, with their constantly improving machinery, would always be able to produce commodities as cheaply. To the final question whether the war talk in Japan might not be stopped by official interposition, he replied that, while undoubtedly the Tokio Government could stifle it, such a proceeding might give the talk more importance than it deserved. There seems, by the way, to be no foundation for the report that our Navy Department is seriously considering the expediency of placing all of our battle-ships in the Pacific, leaving our seaports on the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico to be defended by monitors, armored cruisers, protected cruisers, submarines and gunboats. The newspaper discussion of the subject has had, however, a wholesome effect. It has fastened attention on the fact that we have it in our power to place within a few months no fewer than twenty-one battle-ships—three of which have a displacement of 16,000 tons, and four a displacement of about 15,000 tons—in the Pacific Ocean, a force with which Japan could not dream of competing.

Until the fact was brought out the other day in the Washington

"Star," few Americans were aware that we annually pay a considerable sum in pensions to persons who live in foreign countries. There are, it seems, no fewer than 5,268 such pensions. Of these 2,657 dwell in Canada, 600 in Germany, 495 in Ireland, 391 in England and 27 in Scotland. Even in Switzerland there are 70, and a like number in Sweden. In almost every other European State, and also in Australasia, China and Japan, there are at least a few individuals who receive yearly a pension voucher from our Government. The whole sum, however, thus disbursed is relatively inconsiderable, being only \$750,000, whereas the total amount to be paid out on account of our pension list next year will fall but little short of \$150,000,000.

Since we reviewed the status of the Presidential campaign a month ago, there have been some changes. The unanimous endorsement of the candidacy of Senator Knox by the Pennsylvania State Convention seems to have fallen flat. It has evoked no enthusiastic response even in New England, and scarcely any attention has been paid to it in the Central West, or in the Trans-Mississippi States. Judge Taft still appears to be certain to have the Ohio delegation behind him, but there are indications that his nomination might deprive the Republicans of the negro vote in that State. The indignation which has been worked up among negroes by Senator Foraker's exposure of the scanty evidence on which the colored companies accused of disorder in Brownsville were dismissed is threatening Republican supremacy in a number of States where the negro vote is large enough to turn the scale in closely contested elections. It seems to have been the fear of losing the negro vote that caused the Kentucky State Convention to refrain, the other day, from endorsing Judge Taft by name, though it commended the Roosevelt policies. The Republican State Committee of Kansas approved Judge Taft's candidacy some time ago, but that was before politicians had awakened to the possibility that the Brownsville incident might cause negro voters to support the Democratic nominee. On the whole, it now looks as if there would be a great many "favorite-son" delegations in the next Republican National Convention, and Colonel Henry Watterson, who is as good a prophet as any, might be right in believing that Governor Hughes, if he has the New York delegates behind him, may, in the end, get the nomination.